

## The Fellowship of The Ring by ghibliterritory

**Series:** The Lord of The Rings [1]

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** F/M, Mike still can't get over her

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Eleven, Holly Wheeler, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Karen Wheeler, Lucas Sinclair, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Ted Wheeler, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Mike Wheeler & Holly Wheeler, Mike Wheeler & Nancy Wheeler, Mike Wheeler/Eleven (implied), Nancy Wheeler/Jonathan Byers/Steve Harrington (implied)

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**Summary:**

It's been 365 days since she left. And Mike hasn't been the same since.

## The Fellowship of The Ring

It's been exactly 365 days since she left.

Mike knows because the world around him has shed its skin like it does at the end of every year, each little change making life seem longer than it really is. He sees his friends opening Christmas presents, and snow falling on the ground. He sees the green return to the trees, and bugs come out of their hiding. He feels it get hotter, and the water from the lake on his back to cool him down.

But it all comes back to the fallen leaves and the coldness. The bitter cold that he used to associate with the coming holidays, the time off of school and the infamous time spent on campaigns and movie marathons. Now all it does is send her picture into his mind. As if he doesn't spend every second of every day already thinking about her.

His parents argue about it. "He needs help", his dad yells. "He's just hurting", his mother defends. Neither of them really get it. He doubts either of them will. The only people who really get it are Nancy, Dustin, and Will.

Nancy lost someone too. She still cries at night about it. She still has nightmares, and she looks at the little scar on her hand with a distasteful look.

Dustin knew how close they were before anyone else did. He had appreciated her almost as much, and had comforted Mike the first few weeks of her absence.

Will knew that if she was anywhere, she was in the Upside Down. He feared for her. He told Mike about his fear. Will sometimes thinks it's his fault that Mike got so haywire about finding her.

He put her fort back up again, after smashing it down a million times out of his frustration, and would sit in it for days. He held his radio to his chest, and would either whisper his reassurances that he would find her soon, or scream at how she left them all so soon, so without warning. Then he'd throw it across the room and break down into his fits of tears that now came at least once a day. His mother would

listen from the kitchen. Nancy would hear through the floorboards and sigh. Holly would ask so innocently why Mike was sad, because she loved that boy more than anyone realized.

After his throat was too sore to cry any more, he'd go out and make it worse by screaming into the empty woods.

He never got a response.

Mike skipped the Snow Ball. His friends tried to get him to go, pleading with him. He said he had work to catch up on. Really, he just lays in her fort and cries for hours.

Every time he goes to sleep, he dreams of her. It's never the same dream, but the same message. Sometimes, it'll be night she left. Sometimes it's her in what he thinks the Upside Down looks like, screaming for him. Sometimes, she's in a cage, with the Bad Men as the bars around her. He always tries to grab her, to pull her out of the dream world. But, he never does, and the last thing he remembers is the piercing screams she made before he shoots awake.

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It's been 731 days since she left.

Lucas has yelled at him over and over to just let it be. "She's not coming back," he says, his voice filled with frustration. "Let her go."

Mike's reminded himself time and time again not to punch him.

Dustin has given up on comforting him now. He's on the same side as Lucas, saying that whatever this was he was doing wasn't healthy. If he didn't let go soon, it would hurt him.

Even Will is starting to nod with them sometimes.

But Mike doesn't need them. He has his fort, and his radio. It's all he needs anymore.

His parents really get involved when his grades start to drop. They threaten a mental institution, a therapist. Mike spits at them and

disappears to his room. Who needs parents? Who cares if they send him away? It doesn't matter, *none of it matters to him anymore*.

Nancy and Hopper are the only people who can get to him anymore.

Nancy reminds him that she'll come back. She's smart. She's brave. She's tougher than all of them. That makes him smile, which his sister loves to see.

Hopper promises that he's looking. And he keeps to his words. Mike will often come in and help the chief look through papers about the lab she was trapped in, or he'll join him in a wood search.

He puts his radio by his bedside table, and starts sleeping in his room again. It puts his mother at ease, though she'll still sit in the kitchen and chug glass after glass of coffee in worry for her little boy.

He once made her a mixtape, at the beginning of the year. It has all the songs that reminds him of her on it, that he can put on one tape. His favorite is Space Oddity. It makes him cry, and he plays it on repeat when he can.

His grades pick back up. He laughs at Dustin's jokes again, and writes campaigns the way he used to. He apologizes to his friends. To his parents. To Nancy, and to the rest of the people who he'd dragged down with him. Everything goes back to normal.

Except he still listens. He still looks at the fort longingly, and sometimes he'll even watch the lights in the new science room for a flicker.

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It's been 1,095 days since she left.

Mike feels better now. He goes through his life with a smile, like he used to do. Everyone's convinced that the little girl with the shaved head is out of his mind forever.

Sometimes, he'll look at her fort. Sometimes, he'll sleep in there when he has a nightmare. Sometimes, he'll fiddle with the

Demogorgon figurine, or he'll fiddle with his radio dials. A deep pit in his stomach hopes that he gets something that time.

Nothing comes.

Holly loves the fort. She'll sit in it all the time and listen to the boys play their games, learning slowly. She's told Mike a thousand times that one day, she's going to be a dungeon master too. She's gonna be just as good as him. Mike tells her she'll be better than him, without a doubt, and his little sister giggles in delight.

He has a job now. He works for the movie theater in town, having become a bit of a film nut over time. It distracts him from his thoughts.

Nancy has gone off to college with Jonathan and Steve. He's still unsure of their relationship. But they all seem happy, holding each other's hands and sharing secrets he wish he had with her.

He plays her mixtape still. The songs echo around him and he'll remember her smile. Her laugh, though he's only heard it a few times before, it's still ingrained in his memory. Space Oddity comes on and he sings it into his radio, wondering if she can hear him now.

It's been 1,095 since she left. Mike Wheeler has never been truly the same since then.

But he's coming to terms with his loneliness.

On the other side, a girl watches his life in echos and distant noises, and prepares for her return.

#### **Author's Note:**

Okay, so this was a work for Stranger Things Appreciation Week Day One: Favorite Character. I chose Mike, becayse he's my son. Don't worry, though, I've got more stuff planned. You're gonna like it. Go follow my writing blog decorative-notebook.tumblr.com for more stuff to come!